

CSN Stores Case Study

Leading Online Retailer Generates 3X Lift in Email Referral Campaign Performance



"By leveraging StrongMail Influencer and the expertise of StrongMail's Strategic Services team, we were able to develop a referral program that generated new Rewards members at three times the rate of our previous efforts."

Ed Macri
VP Advertising and Business Intelligence
CSN Stores



CSN Stores
Boston, MA
www.csnstores.com

Industry
Retail

Employees
400+

Return on Investment

- > 1 new rewards member for every 1.8 invites shared
- > 10% of new members went on to complete a purchase

Key Benefits

- > Real-time visibility into campaign performance
- > Identify key influencers
- > Increase Rewards member conversions
- > Expand reach

Products & Services

StrongMail® Influencer™

CSN Stores LLC began in 2002 and has grown rapidly into a 'Top 3' online U.S. retailer of home furnishings and housewares, according to *Internet Retailer* magazine. The respected industry publication also named CSN Stores to its 2009 Hot 100 list of best retail web sites. In addition to providing unparalleled selection and customer service to its U.S. customers, CSN Stores also serves online shoppers from Canada, the U.K. and Germany.

Over the past year, CSN Stores launched a Rewards program to reward its most loyal customers, and the company needed to find a way to motivate these customers to share those benefits with friends and family. CSN Stores first tried to accomplish this by sending a conventional email referral campaign to an engaged group of current CSN Rewards customers. However, while the campaign's open rate was in line with expectations, it was not effective at getting these engaged customers to follow through and invite their friends to join.

Most customers who opened the email did not go on to forward the offer to their friends. As a result, CSN Stores began looking for another solution that would enable its customers to share the CSN loyalty program with their friends and family.



Email recipients were given a clear and compelling incentive to share.

Facilitating Sharing with Innovative Technology and Strategy

CSN Stores found that StrongMail offered the technology and expertise it needed to drive the sharing goals of the CSN Rewards referral program. StrongMail's Influencer technology provided a next-generation sharing platform to facilitate sharing via email, blogs and popular social networks, while its Strategic Services arm had a proven track record for creating successful campaigns based on the social motivators most aligned with a company's target audience.

"We had a lot of positive feedback on our CSN Rewards programs from existing members, so it came down to finding the right solution that would motivate them to invite their friends to try it too," said Ed Macri, vice president of Advertising and Business Intelligence at CSN Stores. "Working with StrongMail, we created a new referral campaign that leveraged StrongMail Influencer to incentivize and motivate recipients to share CSN Rewards invitations with their friends."



The share link brings up a widget for direct sharing via online email accounts, blogs or social networks.

Motivating with a Compelling Offer

Working with StrongMail, CSN Stores developed a StrongMail Influencer campaign that incentivized current CSN Rewards members with a \$15 credit in their Rewards account for each friend that enrolled in the program and made a subsequent purchase. Members also received a \$75 bonus when they referred 5 friends who went on to sign up, for a total possible account credit of \$150. In order to make the program even more viral, the referred friends were offered the same \$15 credit for extending the offer to their networks.

The final offer tapped two powerful social motivators – altruism and self-reward. Once this offer was finalized, CSN Stores emailed the StrongMail Influencer campaign to its Reward members and featured it the CSN Recommends weekly deal alert email.

Expanding Reach and Conversions by Integrating Email and Social Media

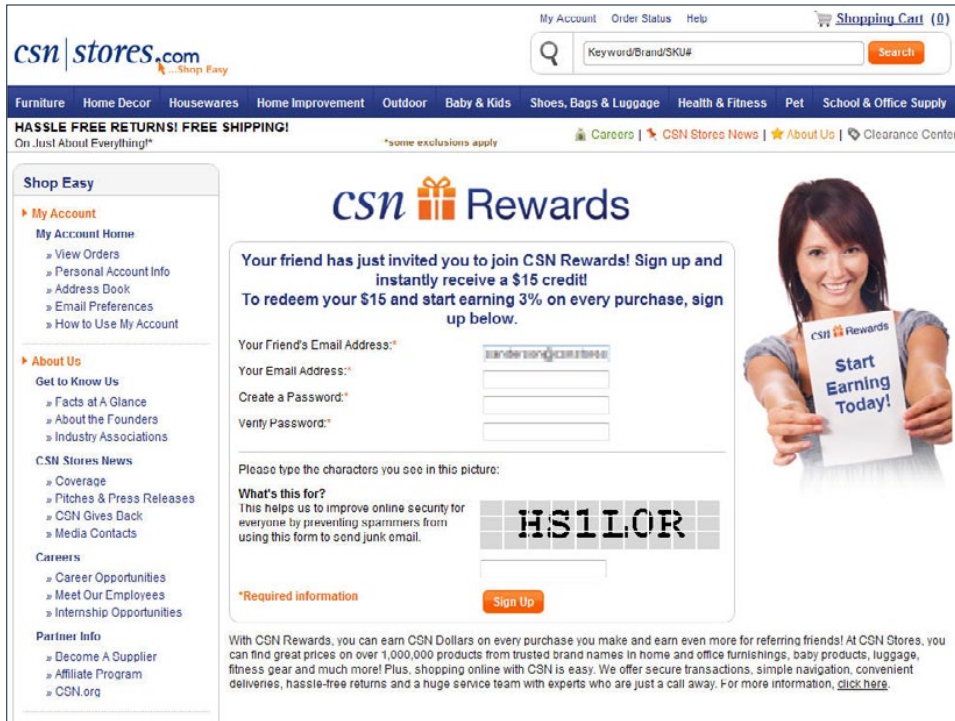
Not only did the StrongMail Influencer-powered referral campaign increase reward program sign-ups by a factor of three, it expanded its reach beyond CSN's existing customer base.

"By leveraging StrongMail Influencer and the expertise of StrongMail's Strategic Services team, we were able to develop a referral program that generated new Rewards members at 3 times the rate of our previous efforts," said Macri.

Using StrongMail Influencer's viral sharing technology, CSN Stores was able to generate click-through rates four times higher than those reported for simply adding a sharing link to an email template. In fact, click throughs from Influencer-enabled sharing (via email and social networks) generated an 80% lift in total click-throughs as compared to click throughs from contacts on the original email list. More importantly, for every 1.8 customers from the initial mailing who shared the email, one new CSN Rewards account was created, and ten percent of those new members went on to complete a purchase.

- > **3x** lift in new Rewards members compared with previous referral campaign
- > **1** new member for every 1.8 invites shared
- > **10%** of new members went on to complete a purchase
- > **80%** lift in total click throughs from email and social sharing activity
- > **4.3** emails sent by each influencer, on average

“The success of this program lies largely with StrongMail’s technology that enables our customers to easily control how and when to share CSN with their friends and family via their favorite social networks,” said Macri.



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Clicking on an invite brings the friend to the site to register for the reward program where they are given the opportunity to invite their friends as well.

About StrongMail® Influencer™

StrongMail® Influencer™ injects rich social networking functionality into any email communication – allowing email marketers to extend the reach of their programs by creating engaging experiences that invite consumers to share their brand or offer with friends, relatives and colleagues. By leveraging social motivators when developing the campaign strategy, StrongMail helps ensure that recipients stay connected to the brand, and consumers are motivated to share the campaign with their trusted friends.

Each Influencer-enabled campaign is powered by a viral marketing engine that offers real-time optimization of creative executions to maximize virality and impact. The dashboard allows marketers to actively participate in the virality of your message, not just track it. Use it to influence the conversation, multiply your reach, and drive ROI.



About StrongMail Systems, Inc.

StrongMail's online marketing solutions for email and social media enable businesses to reach, engage and influence their target audience using the most powerful channels available to marketers today.

StrongMail gives email marketers the control and support they need to improve campaign performance, boost deliverability and lower costs, while also leveraging the power of social media to extend the reach of their campaigns and brand to new audiences. Combining an easy-to-use email marketing application, high-performance delivery system, viral-marketing tool, social media integration, and a wide range of deliverability, strategic and supporting services, StrongMail makes it possible for companies with all levels of resources and expertise to take advantage of its proven solutions.

Headquartered in Redwood City, CA, StrongMail's clients include global leaders across virtually every industry.

To learn more about StrongMail, please visit www.strongmail.com.

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StrongMail's Social Media Solutions

StrongMail developed its suite of social media solutions with a direct marketer's perspective in mind. Our products enable marketers to launch direct-response campaigns into social media and reach and identify key brand influencers across blogs, Twitter, Facebook and other social networks. Each of our social media products enable you to analyze and track campaign performance all the way through to the conversion so you can truly understand the business impact of your social media efforts.

In addition to being fully integrated into its email marketing solutions, StrongMail's social media tools are also available directly to online marketers as components of the StrongMail® Social Studio™ suite.

StrongMail Social Studio

StrongMail Social Studio is a comprehensive social media marketing platform for the professional marketer that features a referral marketing platform, social sharing tool and campaign management application – all in one solution.

StrongMail Social Studio consists of the following proven solutions that have driven measurable results for organizations across a variety of vertical industries.

StrongMail Influencer™ – Acquire new customers by launching viral marketing campaigns that leverage your biggest brand advocates to spread the word about your brand or offer. Get detailed reports on sharing behavior and conversions, and build loyalty segments for future re-marketing efforts.

Social Notes® – Enable website visitors and email subscribers to share branded content across the top social networks, blogs and email. View the most popular content and social sharing channels alongside usage activity such as views, clicks and conversion rates.

Social Direct™ Beta – Currently in private beta, Social Direct is an innovative campaign management tool for launching targeted, direct-response campaigns into Twitter and Facebook and tracking performance all the way to the conversion. The solution will be formally added to Social Studio at the end of the beta period.

Complementary Strategic Services

StrongMail complements its social media solutions with a wide array of strategic services ranging from strategy and creative services to production and full-service program management. Get expert assistance in developing your social media strategy and learn proven strategies for monetizing the social web by identifying, motivating and tracking the behaviors of advocates and influencers within your current customer base.

For additional information about StrongMail's social media solutions, call (650) 421-4200 or visit us www.strongmail.com.

